

Life of John Foster.

three missionaries and the committee of the Baptist Missionary Society. It is an occurrence which may fitly be left to sleep in oblivion. This was the one interruption to a sober existence.

The six years which followed 1832 formed the saddest period of Foster's life. It began with the fatal illness of his wife, who died in September of the year just named. It was to her that Foster owed, not only a very great portion of happiness, but a great deal of the mental improvement he had made during their married life, a period of twenty-five years. Mrs. Foster's intellect was remarkably strong and correct, and in refinement of perception and depth of reflective feeling she had few equals. Not long after three of Foster's most intimate friends also died ; and, last of all, came the death of his only brother.

The Serampore Controversy, together with his domestic concerns, so fully absorbed Foster's attention that for almost nine years he prepared nothing for the press except *Observations on Mr. Hall as a Preacher*, and a new edition (the ninth) of the *Essays*. This ninth edition underwent a final revision at the suggestion of a Mr. Anderson, "the acute literary friend" alluded to in the preface. In addition to these publications Foster gave to the world two letters on the Church and the Voluntary Principle, and three on the Ballot, all which were sent to the public journals.

The literary career of our essayist came to a close in 1839 with an article in the *Eclectic Review* for July, on *Polack's New Zealand*. The last time of his appearing on any public occasion was in June, 1843, at the annual meeting of the Bristol Baptist College. His health now was rapidly failing. On the 24th of September he took to his room, which he never left again. On the night of Saturday, the 14th of October, he was in a state of considerable exhaustion, but refused to allow any one to sit up with him. About six o'clock in the morning an old servant went to his door : she heard no sound, and entered. Foster was at rest, his arms gently extended and his countenance as tranquil as if he had been in a deep sleep. Death had taken place but a short time before, for only the forehead was cold.

"Foster," says an able critic, "was a man of deep but sombre piety. The shadows that overhung his soul were, however, those of an inborn melancholy, and had nothing